

## **APPENDIX A -- SCENARIO PLANNING**

### **A.1. Background**

Traditional transportation planning relies on the extrapolation of current trends into the future, a process that often precludes creative thinking and does not explicitly take into account the events or decisions that can change current trends. For this reason, traditional planning was rejected in the development of the District's Transportation Plan. In its place, the Department of Public Works chose to become one of the first municipalities to use the process of scenario planning in the development of its Transportation Plan. Details on the scenario planning process and its application in the District are provided below.

### **A.2. Scenario Planning**

Scenario planning involves the development of a range of potential future outcomes, or end-states, followed by a process of looking at the events and decisions that would lead to each of these end-states. The process permits exploration of a range of end-states, rather than a single end-state that is extrapolated from current trends. Events that must and must not occur for an end-state to be realized are identified in order to assess the effects that events and decisions have on the future. The process effectively allows decisions to be pre-tested to assess how well they support or hinder progress towards a desirable future. By looking at a range of futures, the process also produces a transportation plan with the flexibility needed to react to changes that affect the future.

Beyond the overall benefits of scenario planning, the situation in the District of Columbia is ideal for the use of this process. Current trends in population and employment do not paint a very positive picture for the City. Current regional projections show the District losing population and then gaining slightly, to the point that, by 2015, population will be only 0.5 percent higher than it is today. Employment in the District is projected to grow, but at a lesser rate than the region. The combination of no growth in population and only a 20 percent growth in employment over the next 20 years also points to continued increases in suburban to downtown commuting with its attendant impacts on the quality of life for District residents. It was clearly time to explore ways in which the District could "buck" the current trends and work toward becoming an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Phase I in the development of this Transportation Plan involved the identification of transportation, political, institutional and economic issues and the synthesis of five future end-states for the District. These end-states were developed after more than 50 interviews with civic and business leaders in the community. The five end-states represent a range of futures for the District, and they are described below:

#### **Destination DC -- A Tourism and Entertainment Scenario**

This scenario describes a city that has been built on a foundation of international tourism, entertainment and business travel. The Nation's Capital has expanded, grown and built on the existing base of tourism to create a thriving economy driven by a multi-billion dollar tourist industry. Envision a City that expands tourism beyond the monumental core. It attracts visitors from around the country, and the world, to its historic monument, the newly built Disney theme park, and the state-of-the-art Convention Center. Visitors from the surrounding states and the suburban region are attracted to DC's sports and entertainment complexes such as the MCI

Center; Kennedy Center; Lincoln Theater; rebuilt stadium; and new, large, modern shopping mall. The physical gateways to the City – airports, train stations, taxi cabs and highways – are among the cleanest, safest and most inviting in the nation. Employment is up, as the travel and entertainment-focused industries have increased the total number of semi-skilled service jobs in the City by nearly 25 percent. Taxes on new DC businesses and employee-residents bring a wealth of revenue into the City, much of which is re-invested into expanding and diversifying areas that attract tourists.

Deliberate actions by the City government, the Congress, the business community and regional bodies have been necessary to achieve this end-state. For example, in the early years, the District Council established new regulation for the Hotel Revenue Tax, allocating money to District organizations to benefit tourism. In later years, as tourism increased, the tax was reduced in order to make the City more affordable for visitors. Private companies collaborated with City government to introduce tourist friendly services and moderately priced hotels. Information kiosks and online information services were established to encourage tourism and inform visitors of all kinds about the City and its attractions. Public/private collaborations have enabled the development of new tourist destinations such as the Arena, Convention Center, Disney's America, Children's Island, and a "Kennedy Center" east of the Anacostia River that features R&B, jazz, and rock and roll.

Efficient transportation systems are critical to making the City a pleasant, friendly, welcoming place. The team believes that it is critical that all transportation providers and other stakeholders work together to create Destination DC. Systems are developed to move arriving visitors to their hotels in comfort – from Dulles, as well as from National, Union Station and bus depots. Easy-to-use public transportation systems provide access to the major sites in Washington, DC; additional links are made to attractions outside the District. There is a seamless web for air and ground travel. In 1996, an independent authority was created to oversee transportation. The authority established criteria for selecting transportation projects that emphasized (in addition to cost/benefit analyses) benefits to the District and its residents. Two of the major criteria focus on public support for projects and minimal disruption to the community.

On the basis of these criteria, intermodal transportation systems were developed that included a service center for buses with easy access to the monumental core, new facilities at National Airport to accommodate the increased demand, additional rail space, a water transportation system that is popular for both conveyance and recreation, and a state-of-the-art circulator – people mover – that transports pedestrians to key sights around the mall. This circulator and the new light rail lines have become tourist attractions in themselves. Expanding railroad capacity in the District is particularly important. Union Station is at capacity, and in the next few years there will be a new high speed rail system in place for making the trip between New York and Washington in less than one hour. This will put additional strain on existing systems.

For this scenario to develop successfully, the Federal government must be convinced to invest in the City, public/private collaborative efforts must be encouraged, and public support must be engendered to increase community acceptance of the City's focus on tourism and entertainment. Programs for supporting local residents' management and ownership of hotels, restaurants, and other tourist businesses would increase local interest and investment. The City must also launch an aggressive anti-crime campaign to make Destination DC attractive to visitors. This end-state builds on the image of DC as the Nation's Capital: it is the City's strength, with 19 million

visitors in 1994. The scenario imagined a many-fold increase in tourism and a robust economy if the City mobilizes for the future – Destination DC.

### **Free Market Model City – A Public/Private Partnership**

This scenario described an end-state in which a growing national economy, combined with rapid development of information technology and telecommunications, produce a diverse economy in the District. Business-friendly conditions in the City, plus the lure of the vast sea of government-based information, attracted new computing and communications companies, along with the usual government related professional services businesses. The disorganized pool of data created by the Federal government was ripe with opportunities for people who could process and resell information in more useful forms. The City focused on its primary advantage, information, and launched a concerted effort to attract new companies by initiating business-friendly tax structures and easing regulatory restrictions. The DC NetPlex (encompassing both the City and the suburbs) grows larger than the Silicon Valley and provides leading edge information management services to clients throughout the world. The approval of a reciprocal income tax agreement provides a major boost to the City in its attempt to become economically viable.

This scenario calls for changes in the structure of the City's government; a highly skilled, politically seasoned, city manager was hired by the newly elected board of selectmen following passage of revised home-rule legislation. Plans were made to outsource the management of law enforcement, buses and subways, UDC, welfare administration, and even the fire department. The management contract negotiated by the City demand performance levels within clear budget constraints; failure to perform means losing the contract. The District earned a reputation as a "model city" in the early years of the new century, in recognition of its success in providing efficient services to residents and businesses who came to be considered "customers." City government and the business community worked together to promote and encourage the involvement of individual business leaders in the process and to establish conditions necessary for the District's success. The team thought that a financial/governmental crisis may need to occur before leaders realized the extent of the commitment that will be needed to improve the City.

While privatization and outsourcing are an integral element in achieving this scenario, that policy raises many obstacles to be overcome on the way to this future. For example, outsourcing and downsizing of government shifts jobs from the public to the private sector. Some people cannot compete in this new environment. The City government must then focus on education and training. It will be necessary to work to instill an entrepreneurial spirit in the citizenry and to provide a safety net for workers who have difficulty adjusting to the new environment. Wealthy neighborhoods sprouted in some areas of the City, creating inequalities and disparities that contribute to crime. While community policing programs can be used effectively to combat sporadic outbreaks, there is worry about the quality of life in a world driven by and focused on business benefits and business values.

An outline of the implications for the transportation systems in this scenario are: (1) telecommuting will change traditional traffic patterns; (2) mass transit will increase in popularity, leading to reduced single occupant vehicle (SOV) use; (3) the Federal government will begin charging for parking, and promoting telecommuting; and (4) more customized public

transportation services (feeders, buses, etc.) will be needed. The team listed the following strategic criteria for selecting transportation projects: overall trip reduction, environmental improvement, transportation “quality of life” (bikeways, pedestrian, busways), cost, links to regional system, high service standards, and accessibility for low-income and under-served areas.

### **The Common Good – A Federal/City Partnership**

This scenario sees the nationwide trend of streamlining and rebuilding business processes to make them more effective adopted by many governmental jurisdictions. A mutual understanding of the necessity to renew the economic and social vitality of the District, in which the City and Federal governments must co-exist, has invoked a strategic partnership. Reform efforts on the part of the City Council and the Mayor's office have strengthened the relationship between the City and Congress. As a result, the Federal and District governments have teamed together to restore the Nation's Capital to prosperity. Washington, DC, has become a successful company town. Its residents are proud to be at the seat of the Federal government, as most of them either work for the government or in closely related industries. The old animosity between DC and Federal politicians has dissipated; the Federal/City partnership is not viewed as diminishing the value of home rule, but, instead, is considered an ideal representation of what home rule should have been from its inception.

There are several factors that might precipitate a Federal/City partnership: enlightened City leadership, an enlightened U.S. President or a major catastrophe. A serious crisis, such as a series of ozone alert days or any number of other environmental hazards that triggered sanctions, would be the most probably catalyst of such a partnership. According to the scenario, the District changed its political approach dramatically in the late-1990s. For example, the District introduced a fast-track permit process for GSA projects, made more land available to the Federal government for office space, and restored its own fiscal health. In response, the Federal government began to pay a larger share of the City's budget, thus strengthening the partnership. Congress agreed to fund Medicaid for the District, paid a real estate “contribution” equal to taxes levied on private owners, and launched several innovative transportation initiatives. As a result, the two jurisdictions are developing a new pattern of working together for the “Common Good”.

Transportation decisions are made with the City's best interests in mind. Given the degree of Federal activity in the Capital, the Federal government has helped support important transportation initiatives by financing, managing, and sponsoring them. For example, Congress passed the National Capital Transportation Extension Act, providing additional funding for mass transit in the region, and the Federal government began charging for parking to deter commuters from driving to work. Innovative transportation systems such as light rail, electric bus, and water transit have also been introduced through collaborative efforts between the Federal government and the City. Recently, there has been an effort to make public transit itself part of the tourist attraction of the District, as is the case in San Francisco and New Orleans. A boat tour of the City, for example, might take visitors to each of the monuments, and new forms of light rail might pass by a series of other tourist attractions.

The city described in this scenario is achievable; it builds on Washington's unique status. The team, however, identified several barriers to its success. They argued that the emphasis on the City as the seat of the Federal government might limit economic and social diversity. Further, GSA developments in remote areas might promote sprawl, stretching the City's borders beyond

manageable boundaries. In addition, there was worry about the long-term sustainability of the scenario, both economically and politically. Finally, this scenario would be perceived to be antithetical to hopes for statehood.

### **Potomac Renaissance – A Regional Solution**

In this end-state, regional solutions to problems, and regional responses to opportunities, have proliferated nationwide. The Washington, DC, metropolitan area, though somewhat slower to build the necessary coalitions than some regions, overcame the special problems associated with District/multi-state relations and built strong regional ties. The concentration of government and related businesses offered a sufficient magnet to attract additional international businesses and promote economic development throughout the entire region – City and suburbs no longer compete, but cooperate, to attract residents and businesses. Tysons Corner, Reston, and the Dulles Corridor have all developed strong commercial centers, each with its own clearly defined niche. These centers complement each other, offering diverse settings for businesses with varying needs. Increasingly, large companies are locating various parts of their operations in appropriate centers throughout the Potomac region. For example, a company may locate its headquarters in the District, its manufacturing plant in Reston, and its logistics operations in the Dulles Corridor.

In the course of this scenario, a series of shared problems and challenges compel the region's stakeholders to rally together. For example, air quality was not meeting attainment levels, so new, environmentally-friendly programs had to be adopted; DC General Hospital has closed its doors, which, in turn, created a health care supply deficit in the region; and part of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge collapsed, increasing congestion throughout the region. In order to deal with these dilemmas, independent governing bodies joined together to come up with dynamic, regional solutions. As they worked together, the region's leaders realized that sharing resources in crime prevention, environmental clean-up, waste removal, and water usage would reduce their overall costs and enhance the value provided to residents and visitors.

Thus, major catastrophes in the region were the catalyst that united independent organizations and jurisdictions, and led to a shared belief that regional collaboration was the most effective way for the City and its surroundings to prosper. Some of the events identified in the scenario include: independent governmental bodies meet together regularly; a regional transportation plan was accepted by Maryland, Virginia, and the District; and, at the turn of the century, a regional council was elected to promote regional planning and implementation efforts.

The primary criterion for pursuing transportation projects in this scenario is ensuring regional integrity. For example, a common ticketing system has been adopted by WMATA, VRE, and MARC; bi-directional transportation links connect the key business centers, residential suburbs, and urban core; and several bus routes have been privatized in order to ensure flexible service. Another important criterion is that projects must meet stringent environmental standards. The region has promoted telecommuting as an alternative to traditional transportation and has preserved several "green" areas, both inside the core and in its surrounding neighborhoods, as parks and recreation grounds. Sustainability and intermodal connectivity are the other important criteria cited for transportation projects.

This scenario, while very desirable, was judged to be difficult to achieve. First, it depends on turning around an ingrained cultural pattern – a long history of conflict between the City, Congress, and the surrounding region. Secondly, many of the transportation initiatives, particularly efficient links between the suburbs and the City, will levy a significant financial burden. Finally, the District community may not support regional unification, particularly if they believe it threatens their independence. Some measures are proposed that might help overcome these barriers, such as strong government policies to signal other parts of the region that change is needed, adopting a reciprocal income tax to generate additional revenue, developing a negotiating stance toward other jurisdictions, and building coalitions and support within the community. There was solid agreement among the team that some sort of shared crisis would have to occur to precipitate this scenario.

### **New Columbia World Center – the District Becomes a World Capital**

The City that has been transformed from a National Capital in some disarray in 1994 to a prosperous international business center – a World Capital – by 2015. New wealth and business has been attracted by a special IRS tax status granted to the District. The new City is cosmopolitan, offering world-class arts, entertainment, dining, and night life to its diverse residents and visitors. This new vitality has caused many people, newcomers and former suburbanites alike, to settle in popular residential areas throughout the District. To accommodate the expanded population, the beauty, cleanliness, and security of the downtown area has been extended well beyond the monumental core, paving the way for upgrading neighborhoods in many parts of the City. Washington's prestige as the center of the world's only superpower has fulfilled its promise; the City has become headquarters for many foreign businesses. Employment is up, particularly in the high paying service professions such as lawyers, lobbyists, financial analysts, and consultants, and the residential population has nearly doubled since 1994. The team felt strongly that the City's high schools much offer multi-lingual education and advanced training and apprentice programs to prepare the population for the new working environment. The District's universities have become world-renowned for their excellence in international studies.

Aggressive efforts were made on the part of the District and Federal governments to attract international businesses and residents to the New Columbia World Center. High-quality developers were offered generous incentives to build up the waterfront and other inner city areas; luxury office and residential buildings have appeared. The government lured the United Nations from New York; its migration brought with it thousands of highly paid diplomats and their staffs, who contribute to preserving Washington, DC, for local residents. The team adamantly opposed a scenario that would gentrify the whole City, pushing all low income residents to the inner suburbs. Thus the education system has been vastly enhanced; low income housing is still available; and the Federal government, which employs many of the City's middle class workers, maintains a stable foothold in the District. Also, Anacostia was made a free-trade zone, which has spurred the development of light manufacturing plants and jobs in the District.

The District has noticeably changed its approach to transportation and land use to accommodate its new status. The international population, unaccustomed to single occupancy vehicles and the pollution they bring, demands alternative transportation systems. Well beyond compliance with Federal regulations, the government has enhanced, promoted, and introduced environmentally friendly transportation options. A host of organizations have worked together to expand the

Metrorail beyond its 103-mile limit, introduce water taxis, increase the number of bike paths in the City, and widen sidewalks in highly traveled areas. In addition, there has been a string effort to connect disparate modes of transportation so that, for example, travelers have seamless connections between the airports and their hotels. Another priority has been the building of links that have long-term sustainability, not just temporary solutions to travel peaks. To accommodate the influx in travelers, Amtrak has bought the Benning Road facility and expanded the number of trains traveling into and out of the Capital.

For this scenario to develop, the City must lay out a cogent vision for its future. While the team recognizes that the City might offer enticing tax breaks to lure companies into the District, it also indicated that such a program may temporarily reduce the revenue stream coming from taxes. Also, the team raised concerns about balancing growth with the maintenance of a strong sense of community in the District. The City's growth will not only affect the types of jobs available to middle- and low-income workers, but it might also detrimentally affect land use for historical sites and open space. These issues will have to be managed carefully in order for this scenario to unfold successfully. The team indicated that while this end-state builds on the District's reputation and unique strengths today, it will not be easy to create the New Columbia World Center of tomorrow.

### **A.3. Incorporating the Scenarios into the Development of the Transportation Plan**

Phase II in the development of the Transportation Plan involved further exploration of the Phase I scenarios and the identification of transportation improvements that support or hinder each scenario. District residents, businesses, and decision-makers participated in workshops where the transportation implications of the scenarios were explored fully. A composite scenario was developed based on overall consensus of Phase I and Phase II participants that the Tourism scenario represented the most achievable end-state and that the World Capital scenario represented the most desirable. Participants also generally agreed that a Federal/City partnership was necessary for the District to achieve world-class city status. The discussion findings from these workshops resulted in the development of a transportation vision, strategy, and action plan for the District.